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South Carolina House of Representatives

Jennifer L. Dobson
Research Director

Cathy A. Greer
Administration Coordinator

Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211
Telephone: (803) 212-6810 • Fax: (803) 212-6811
Room 228 Blatt Building

Charles L. Appleby IV
Legal Counsel

Education and Cultural Subcommittee Meeting
May 12, 2015
9:30 a.m.
Room 516 - Blatt Building

ARCHIVED VIDEO AVAILABLE

- I. You may access archived video of this meeting by visiting the South Carolina General Assembly's website (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov>) and click on "Citizens' Interests," then click on "House Legislative Oversight Committee Postings and Reports." Lastly, click on "Video Archives" for a listing of archived videos for the Legislative Oversight Committee.

MINUTES

- I. House Rule 4.5 requires the standing committees of the House to prepare and make available for public inspection, in compliance with Section 30-4-90, the minutes of full committee meetings. House Rule 4.5 further provides that such minutes need not be verbatim accounts of such meetings. It is the practice of the House Legislative Oversight Committee to provide minutes, which are not verbatim accounts of such meetings, for its Subcommittee meetings.

Attendance

- II. The Education and Cultural Subcommittee (Subcommittee) meeting was called to order by Subcommittee Chair James E. Smith, Jr. on Tuesday, May 12, 2015, in Room 516 of the Blatt Building, Columbia, South Carolina. The following Subcommittee Members were present: Subcommittee Chair Smith, Representative Gary E. Clary, and Representative Tommy M. Stringer. Also present was Representative Robert Q. Williams.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

- II. House Rule 4.5 requires the standing committees of the House to prepare and make available for public inspection, in compliance with Section 30-4-90, the minutes of full committee meetings. House Rule 4.5 further provides that such minutes need not be verbatim accounts of such meetings. It is the practice of the House Legislative Oversight Committee to provide minutes which are not verbatim accounts of such meetings, for its subcommittee meetings.
- II. Subcommittee Chair Smith submitted proposed minutes from the Committee’s previous meeting, February 24, 2015. Representative Gary E. Clary moved to approve the minutes. A roll call vote was held, and all present voted in favor of approval.

Rep. Clary’s Motion to Approve the Minutes from the February 24, 2015 Meeting	Yea	Nay	Not Voting
Rep. Gary E. Clary	Yea		
Rep. Joseph H. Jefferson Jr.			(Not Present)
Rep. Tommy M. Stringer	Yea		
Rep. James E. Smith Jr.	Yea		

Discussion of the Scope of Study of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness

- III. In attendance from the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness (First Steps) were the following: Ms. Susan DeVenny, State Director, First Steps; Dr. Dan Wuori, Deputy Director, First Steps; Mr. Mark Barnes, Chief Financial Officer /Chief Operating Officer, First Steps; Ms. Debbie Robertson, Chief Partnership Officer, First Steps; and Mr. Ken Wingate, Chair, First Steps Board of Trustees.
- IV. This meeting with First Steps was held to provide the agency and the public an update on the status of the oversight study of the agency; allow Subcommittee Members to ask preliminary questions; ensure the agency understood that the Subcommittee and its staff would answer any questions the agency may have about the agency’s Program Evaluation Report, which is due May 22, 2015; and allow the Subcommittee Members to ask any additional questions. Subcommittee Chair Smith provided an update on the status of the oversight study, and he then swore under oath Mr. Barnes, Ms. Robertson, Ms. DeVenny, Mr. Wingate, and Dr. Wuori.

After Ms. DeVenny was sworn in, Subcommittee Chair Smith asked questions to Ms. DeVenny, and Ms. DeVenny responded to all questions. Subcommittee Chair Smith questions to ensure that the agency publishes its Restructuring Report and Program Evaluation Report on the agency’s website. Subcommittee Chair Smith asked questions to ensure the agency notifies both agency personnel and local county partnerships that the agency is under study and informs both agency personnel and local county partnerships of the opportunity to participate in a survey about the first five agencies under study, including First Steps.

Ms. DeVenny explained that First Steps has issued its own survey as part of its strategic planning with the new board, which includes agency heads of those agencies serving children. Subcommittee Chair Smith asked questions to ensure that First Steps managers are familiar with First Steps prior strategic

plans; Ms. DeVenny indicated there have been three prior strategic plans and that First Steps managers are familiar with those strategic plans. Subcommittee Chair Smith asked what part of the strategic plan will address performance measures. Subcommittee Chair Smith asked if the agency has looked at best practices in other states. Ms. DeVenny indicated that the agency has and that the two states with the most similar structure are Arizona and North Carolina, but emphasized that South Carolina is unique. Subcommittee Chair Smith asked First Steps to supplement its responses so as to update general references to other reports to the agency's Restructuring and Seven-Year Plan Report with those supplemented answers to be submitted before the agency submits its Program Evaluation Report. Subcommittee Chair Smith asked questions about the Program Evaluation Report to ensure that First Steps understands what information the subcommittee is seeking.

Representative Stringer asked Ms. DeVenny about internal audits. Ms. DeVenny indicated that internal controls will be looked at by Mr. Barnes. Representative Stringer asked about any issues over the past few years, and Ms. DeVenny indicated that she was not aware of any. Representative Stringer asked if the Board had a committee relating to internal controls. Representative Stringer asked if Ms. DeVenny thought the agency was adequately staffed for internal controls, and Ms. DeVenny indicated that Mr. Barnes was reviewing the issue with recommendations due by the end of the year.

Subcommittee Chair Smith asked for an explanation as to why the agency was late with information to the Comptroller General for CAFR, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Mr. Barnes offered to research the issue and respond to the subcommittee.

Representative Clary asked if the audit would go all the way to the county level. Ms. DeVenny indicated that she would share the audit results.

Representative Williams, a member of the Legislative Oversight Committee, asked questions about the relationship between First Steps and the Department of Education.

Subcommittee Chair Smith indicated the next step for the agency would be a public work session for the subcommittee to review agency submissions.

Preliminary Meeting with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind

- V. This was also a preliminary meeting with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind held pursuant to Legislative Oversight Committee's Standard Practice 8.3 to discuss preliminary matters relating to the legislative oversight and investigation process with the agency. The discussion referenced the materials the agency had already received in the mail as well as again that morning regarding: the purpose of legislative oversight as set forth in statute; the Legislative Oversight Committee's Rules and the Legislative Oversight Committee's Standard Operating Procedures. The discussion further referenced the goals for the legislative oversight process; the process the Legislative Oversight Committee and this Subcommittee intends to follow in studying the agency; the Legislative Oversight Committee's expectations of an agency undergoing the study. Additionally, Dr. Page B. McCraw, Interim President, was offered an opportunity to ask questions about the legislative oversight process to the Subcommittee.
- VI. The Subcommittee received a brief overview of the agency from Dr. Page B. McCraw, Interim President. Also in attendance at the meeting from the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind were the

following: Mr. Scott A. Falcone, Director of Outreach; Mr. Scott Ramsey, Governmental/Community Affairs; Mr. Trad Robinson, Director of Information Technology; Mr. Will Anthony, who works with Capital Projects and Procurement; and Mr. Ben Riddle, Chief Financial Officer, who has been with the agency for approximately four weeks. Dr. McCraw responded to all questions. Subcommittee Chair Smith had questions about referrals, early interventions, access to services by students across the state, and reuse or repurposing of braille text books. Representative Clary had questions about inmate selection and quality control of text books in the inmate text book production program. Dr. McCraw stated that inmates have to receive certification and proofreading occurs, and the employee is trained by the Department of Corrections. Dr. McCraw indicated that working in this program is a source of pride for inmates, and inmates are paid based in part on production. Representative Clary asked how long the program had been utilized, and the response was since 2003. Representative Clary mentioned that he has known Dr. McCraw for many years. Representative Williams asked questions about security of inmates using computer to braille the text books and security for students on computers. Representative Williams asked about services for families. Dr. McCraw responded to all questions. Dr. McCraw stated that the agency's strategic planning process will benefit from this process.

VII Subcommittee Chair Smith explained that the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind has submitted its Restructuring and Seven-Year Plan Report on March 31, and he advised the agency of the next steps in the legislative oversight process and that staff is available to answer any questions the agency may have.

Adjournment

VIII. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.